



EVERY DAY IN EVERY WAY

USDA's Cultural Transformation Action Items

- LEADERSHIP
- RECRUITMENT & RETENTION
- TALENT MANAGEMENT
- EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT
- CUSTOMER FOCUS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

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MyUSDA

A Progress Report for Employees on USDA's Cultural Transformation

Volume 6, Issue 2

November 2015

USDA Breaks Records in 2015 FFF Campaign

By Jennifer McDowell, National Feds Feed Families Chair

Numbers from the 2015 Feds Feed Families campaign are in, and employees from USDA once again proved their commitment by providing nearly half of all the food donations collected nationwide.

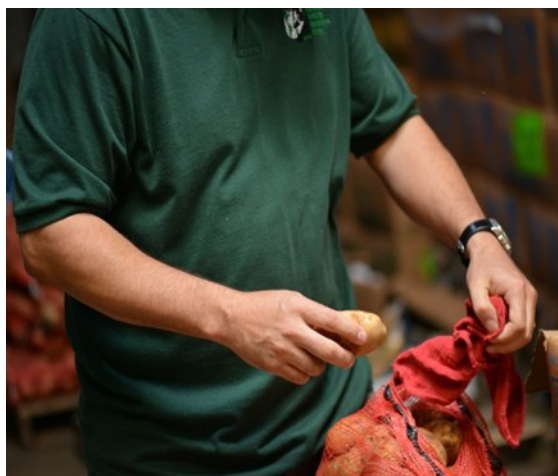
This year, USDA workers donated 7,625,721 pounds of food. That compares to 6.3 million pounds last year and 4.3 million pounds donated in 2013.

Overall, Federal employees donated 17.9 million pounds this year, compared to 14.8 million pounds in 2014. Since 2009, nearly 57 million pounds have been donated to Feds Feed Families.

USDA employees have been instrumental in the ongoing effort to combat hunger and food insecurity throughout the country!

As we continue to build on this drive, USDA plans to help even more people in 2016.

Great job!



USDA employees not only donated food throughout the campaign, they also volunteered to gather, sort, and pack food.

They gathered in groups and traveled to farms and food sorting facilities around the country.



Unlocking Federal Talent

By Dr. Karlease Kelly, Provost, USDA Virtual University

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management established the web site UnlockTalent.gov to provide information to

employees about the results of the 2015 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. The site is:

<https://www.unlocktalent.gov/>.

Employee engagement is defined as, “The employee’s sense of purpose that is evident in their display of dedication, persistence, and effort in their work or overall attachment to their organization and its mission.” The site has information about the Employee Engagement and Global Satisfaction results for Federal agencies. By registering at this site, you can view more details about the survey results specifically for USDA, including data on the demographics of the USDA workforce. You will also be able to view the Community of Practice section of the site that includes promising practices for improving employee engagement, and other helpful resources.

USDA Honors Veterans

The Department recognized the service and commitment of the nation’s veterans this month. At the recent USDA Veterans observance, keynote speaker U.S. Navy Vice Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Michelle J. Howard (pictured below right with fellow service members) addressed employees, recognizing their work and dedication.

USDA Diversity and Inclusion Program Manager, and U.S. Navy (Reserve) Commander Frederick (Fred) Cheng (pictured below left) were among those recognized by Assistant Secretary for Administration Dr. Gregory Parham at the celebration in the Jefferson Auditorium in Washington, D.C.



Photos by USDA photographer Lance Cheung.

USDA Participates in Women of Color Conference

By Montez Ashley, U.S. Forest Service

Forest Service Research and Development staff participated in the 20th Anniversary of the Women of Color Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education conference held October 15 to 17, in Detroit, Michigan. This event attracted approximately 4,000 participants and offered a forum for women of color to share ideas, network, enhance job searches, share current training and development challenges, and inspire the next generation in STEM. Forest Service Research & Development employees served as panelists on seminars covering topics such as mentoring, leadership, and effective communication. Informational material on the Forest Service was distributed at the Research & Development booth.



Pictured, from L-R, Dr. Jimmy Reeves, (Retired Deputy Chief, Research & Development); Linda Jones, (Senior Staff Assistant to the Deputy Chief, Research & Development); Sheree Johnson, (Assistant Director, Field Operations); Montez Ashley, (Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist); Dr. Rima Lucardi, (Research Ecologist); Cheryl Jefferson, (Director, Civil Rights FOIA Youth Programs and Partnerships); Paul Poplett, (Human Resources Officer).

USDA Special Observances

You can read about and view recordings from many of USDA's Special Observances at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/employ/observances.htm>.

Observances are held at the Jefferson Auditorium in Washington, D.C.

Employees receive one hour of diversity training for attending each USDA Special Observance.

USDA Commemorates Hispanic Heritage Month

By Nicole Ebberart, U.S. Forest Service

Forest Service employees in Albuquerque, NM, celebrated Hispanic Heritage month with a lunch and learn event featuring a native New Mexican artist and tips on how to successfully apply for jobs. Participants received a wealth of knowledge while enjoying traditional New Mexican food. Nicolas Otero, a world-renowned artist specializing in the tradition of Santo making, graciously shared his art, and the history behind it, with employees. He emphasized the importance of producing natural pigments and hand carved panels to preserve this ancient tradition. Sonia Ybanez, Forest Service Human Resources Officer, shared tips on resume building and provided insight on items to include in job applications. This celebration was extremely beneficial to participants.



USDA employees explore the natural pigments Nicolas Otero has created to use for painting (above left) and shows a work in progress he has recently started (above right).

We Make It Possible!

By Bruce Campbell, National CFC Chairman

Our Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) theme this year is "We Make it Possible!" CFC benefits countless individuals and families, not just in our neighboring communities, but in cities, towns, and rural communities around the globe. Last year, USDA raised \$1.26 million, and this year, we hope to build on that compassion and raise \$1.5 million. Remember, every penny makes it possible for so many around the world.



[Listen](#) to some of our USDA employee stories about how CFC helped them. There are more than [20,000 charities to choose](#) from or simply ask your favorite charity directly to provide their CFC designation number. You can help in a big way by [making a small donation today](#).

USDA employees visit with charities at the CFC Kickoff Ceremony.

2015 Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards Presented

By Joanna Barlow, USDA Office of Human Resources Management

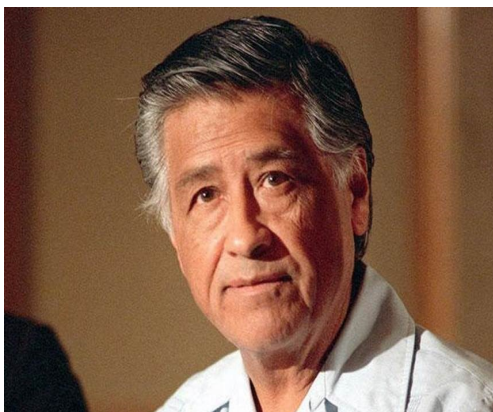
Earlier this month, Secretary Vilsack presented 30 honor awards to individuals and teams who accomplished exceptional

achievements on behalf of USDA's customers and stakeholders. With the newly renamed Abraham Lincoln Honor Awards (formerly the Secretary's Honor Awards), the Department paid homage to our founder at the same time we recognized our present-day innovations.

Awards were given for what has been widely considered the best Farm Bill implementation in USDA's history, and for numerous program initiatives, including developing a training and job placement program that qualifies SNAP applicants to work as FSIS food inspectors. Several management initiatives were recognized, including the renovation of the historic Yates Building and much improved program compliance in our leasing portfolio. In addition, the Farm Service Agency's Bruce Nelson was recognized for expanding USDA program delivery on Montana's seven Indian reservations.

In what is always a solemn moment, we recognized seven USDA employees, a Forest Service volunteer and a New Mexico Department of Agriculture Wildlife Specialist who lost their lives carrying out USDA's mission.

This special day was capped off by commemorating the induction of Cesar Chavez and Dr. Mary-Dell Chilton (pictured below) into the USDA Hall of Heroes for their lifetime contributions to American agriculture.



Finding Ethics

By Jack Fisher, USDA Office of Ethics

Have you ever found yourself wondering, "Can I accept that holiday gift from a contractor?" or "What are the ethics rules that follow me once I leave government?" At some point in your federal career you will encounter

a situation that involves the Federal ethics rules – and these rules can often be complicated. But the very good news is that every USDA employee can contact the Office of Ethics to obtain guidance and advice when one of those issues arise.

You can now, through USDA's Office of Ethics website (www.ethics.usda.gov/advisor.htm), access a regularly updated listing of Agency and Program Specific Ethics Advisors and their contact information.

The Office of Ethics is not involved in investigations, enforcement, or disciplinary actions. Our office exists as a resource to help employees and supervisors understand and navigate the ethics rules. Keep this information handy so you can locate your Ethics Advisor: [Ethics Advisor Locator](#). And while you are visiting the USDA Ethics webpage, look around at all of the helpful advisories, guidance, and information that are available to you 24/7.

USDA Marine Corps Marathoners Go the Distance

By Becky Unkenholz, Agricultural Marketing Service

They come from different agencies, and hold different titles and responsibilities. Yet on October 25 they were all united in running more than 26 miles in the 40th annual Marine Corps Marathon.

For AMS' Craig Morris, running his 26th marathon was an opportunity to recharge his batteries and come back to work challenges with fresh ideas. Gari Jo Green, OIG, was running her first marathon, and described it as "Horridly wonderful. Terrifyingly great. Heart breaking delightful". Also running his first marathon, GIPSA's Barry Gomoll said, "Pushing through some of the harder miles gave me the confidence to take on struggles in life, knowing that all pain is temporary."

Several USDA runners' great motivation was to run the marathon to help charities. They included Shethir Riva, AMS, supporting St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital; Bobby Tran, OCIO CTS, the National Down Syndrome Society; and Juli Polt, FSA, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Others ran to celebrate health and life and to support the Marines. Dora Flores, AMS, was moved by the various commemorations to U.S. service members along the course. APHIS' Denise Sylvester, who ran the 10K portion of the marathon, says her cousin is an active duty Marine stationed in Okinawa, Japan, and being able to high five the Marines and receive a finishers medal from them was very special. Perhaps the marathon experience is best summed up by NIFA's Effie Baldwin, who said "I'm a veteran and I strive for excellence so failure isn't an option!"

All USDA runners are members of USDA's Running and Walking Club (RWC). The club is always looking for new members who are eager to lace up and run or walk with their colleagues. Contact club president Dora Flores at dora.flores@ams.usda.gov or visit RWC's USDA Connect page at <https://connections.usda.gov/communities/community/usdarunningandwalkingclub> for more details.



Denise Sylvester, APHIS, Investigation and Compliance Specialist; Craig Morris, AMS, Deputy Administrator, Livestock, Poultry and Seed Program; Bobby Tran, Office of the Chief Information Officer, National Capital Region Service Desk Manager; Barry Gomoll, GIPSA Grain Marketing Specialist; Shethir Riva, AMS Director, Research and Promotion - Cotton & Tobacco Program; Gari Jo Green, Office of the Inspector General, Supervisor Employee Relations, Human Resources Management Division; Julie Polt, FSA Visual Information Specialist; Dora Flores, AMS, Dairy Program, Marketing Specialist- E-Government, AMS Hispanic Employment Program Manager and President of the USDA Running and Walking Club; and Effie Baldwin, NIFA, Management Resource Officer.

If you'd like to share your feedback about Cultural Transformation, telework, diversity, or any other aspect of work/life at USDA, send an email to: MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov or visit USDA's [Work/Life and Wellness](#) community website if you have access to [USDA Connections](#).



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MyUSDA Staff

Roberta Jeanquart—Editorial Director

Marsha Wiggins—Deputy Editorial Director

Perry Stevens—Editor-in-Chief

Alyn Kiel, Jennifer Yezak, Lynne Short, Karlease Kelly, Debra Arnold, Edwin Cierpial, Jr., James Brent, Melanie Clemons—Editors

Key Contributors:

Zina Sutch, Jacqueline Padron, Yetzenia Correa, Rod Mance, Ali Muhammad, Alison Levy, Michelle Jordan, Tina Hoellerer, Susan Siemietkowski, Jennifer McDowell, Anna Johnson-Yeargins, Becky Unkenholz, Joanna Barlow, Jack Fisher, Stuart Bender, Bruce Alexander, Nicole Ebberhart, Tom Witham, Lance Cheung, Max Finberg, Lisa Mason

If you have ideas for future articles, contact us at MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov

Submit Your Article to MyUSDA

The monthly deadline for submissions is the end of the first week of each month.

Guidance on Submissions to MyUSDA

Submissions to MyUSDA should indicate progress that you, your agency, or your mission area have achieved toward implementing the Secretary's Cultural Transformation (CT) Initiative. The ideal submission includes photos or graphics along with a brief description of the event. The ideal word count for articles is 150-200. All submissions are subject to editing and Departmental review.

Submissions may be in the form of a traditional article with a byline, a first-person account, or any work-related activity, event, or observance demonstrating the Secretary's Cultural Transformation Action Items: Leadership; Recruitment & Retention; Talent Management; Employee Development; and, Customer Focus & Community Outreach.

Email submissions or further inquiries to MyUSDA@dm.usda.gov.